U. S. to equip 6,000 cars in '85

Air-bag demo test moves a step closer

By Jake Kelderman
Washington Staff Writer

WASHINGTON.—The air-bag demonstration program the nation's auto makers have wanted for nearly as long there has been talk about passive safety, same a step closer to reality last week.

NHTSA and the General Services Administration announced a plan to equip as many as 6,000 cars in the federal government's fleet with the devices as early as the 1985 model year.

NHTSA sources said the air bags would be mounted on the driver's side only, and that they would go in a range of car sizes, although the safety agency had wanted all of them to go into subcompacts.

The safety agency also had wanted the devices installed as original equipment, but barring a firm commitment to this end, it is prepared to accept retrofitting of the devices, a source said.

NHTSA recently contracted with the Arizona State Police to retrofit 130 of their late-model Ford LTD cruisers with driver-side air bags as part of its effort to get in-use data on the controversial devices.

The GSA plan was immediately hailed by at least one auto maker and the insurance industry as a definite step forward.

Ford Motor Co.'s Roger Maugh, director of Ford's Automotive Safety Office, said the maker welcomed the announcement as a chance to resolve questions "that can only be answered by much greater in-use experience . . ." The program could shorten development time, he said.

• "Some concerns we would like to see evaluated include system effectiveness, usage rate for the lap belt that is an essential part of the system, actual repair frequency after accidents and the general acceptance of the concept," Maugh said.

Lowell R. Beck, president of the National Assn. of Independent Insurers—the group that earlier this year convinced the U. S. Court of Appeals here to overturn the NHTSA's rescission of the passive restraint standard—said the GSA was to be commended for its action.

"This is a great step forward," Beck said. He said he thought many corporate fleets, including insurance company fleets, will be ordering similar cars from the manufacturer who fills GSA's order. NAII, meanwhile is preparing to argue before the Supreme Court to let the Appeals Court decision stand regarding the passive restraint standard.

The GSA said it would also be fitting the passenger vehicles in its fleet with a high-mounted brake light which research has shown to be effective in reducing rear-end collisions.

The GSA operates a fleet of 85,000 vehicles, but not all of these will be fitted with the extra brake light.

A similar program involving District of Columbia taxi cabs showed the devices to be very effective in reducing rear-end collisions. While NHTSA was pleased with these results, it wanted a greater data base before moving ahead with regulations regarding the device, NHTSA sources said.

NHTSA will fund the air-bag demonstration program, but it could not say what the cost would be since this is highly dependent upon whether the installation of the air bag is OEM or retrofit.

No ordinary Christmas gift

Stephen Forristall, of Forristall's GT Cars of Houston, stands beside the Ferrari 308 GTS that actor Tom Selleck drives to weekly adventure on "Magnum PI." Forristall is including six Hawaiian shirts and a cassette tape of the show's theme song for the buyer of the $55,000 car.

Won fame as car designer and builder

Colin Chapman, 'Mr. Lotus,' dies

NORFOLK, England. — Group Lotus Chairman Colin Chapman, famed race-car designer and founder of Lotus Cars Ltd., died Dec. 15 of an apparent heart attack at his home, Ketteringham Hall, near the Lotus factory here. He was 54.

Anthony Colin Bruce Chapman was born in North London on May 19, 1928. He first built racing and trial cars in 1947. He founded Lotus Cars in 1955 with the help of 25 pounds he borrowed from his girl friend, Hazel, who later became his wife.

An ex-RAF pilot and a graduate of London University, Mr. Chapman was a brilliant innovator and a shrewd businessman. His influence on race-design was legendary and brought Lotus several World Championships as well as victory at Indianapolis.

He was an amateur race driver in the 1950s and it was from this stage of his life that Mr. Chapman became involved in passenger-car production. His first road car, the 1957 Elite, was a typical Colin Chapman creation—a fiberglass-bodied monocoque powered by an engine developed from a Coventry Climax firepump.

Demand for his small-volume car increased, bolstered by his fame on the race track. The company went public in 1968 and Mr. Chapman's successes made him a millionaire.

His early cars were sold as kits which customers assembled. Taxation changes in the United Kingdom forced the company to abandon the kit market. Lotus moved upmarket with more luxurious but still very sporty machines.

The current generation of cars —the Esprit, Eclat and Elite— was launched in 1975. Making more expensive cars meant making fewer cars. The 1981 output amounted to 345 cars, but production this year has been double that figure.

In recent years, the Lotus engineering department has been hired by other auto makers for developmental work. This led to the 1978 contract to help develop the ill-fated DeLorean sports car and, more recently, a contract to design the power unit in BL's new MG Metro Turbo.

Mr. Chapman had extensive knowledge of glass-reinforced plastics, exhaust emissions and turbocharging.

He was Mr. Lotus and commanded enormous respect and loyalty from his staff at the Hethel factory, where he was known affectionately as "the old man."

Mr. Chapman's right-hand man at Group Lotus had been Fred Buchell, the firm's accountant. Managing Director of Lotus Cars is Mike Kimberley. But Mr. Chapman was so closely associated with Group Lotus that it is difficult to predict a natural successor. So many of the key Lotus decisions were Mr. Chapman's.

Colin Chapman

Mr. Chapman is survived by his wife and three children, Jane, Sarah and Clive.

His unexpected death comes at a time when the fortunes of his company are at their lowest ebb. Two weeks earlier, Group Lotus had belatedly announced its 1981 financial results, showing a net loss of 109,000 pounds ($177,000) on greatly reduced sales.

Lotus needs a new financial backer. Its five-year loan agreement with American Express expired in September and has been extended through Dec. 31. Lotus' debt with AmEx amounts to 1.7 million pounds ($2.8 million).

Against this financial background, Lotus is re-establishing its own sales network in the U. S. following the breakup with Rolls Royce. The U. S. is considered a key market for Lotus, though for a period of about one year Lotus stopped building cars for the U. S. market to trim heavy inventories.

—Richard Feast

Ford airs big plans in paint technology

By Al Fleming
Industry Editor

Ford Motor Co. is applying a broad brush to plans for innovative automotive paint products during the next five years.

From now through 1987, development efforts in paint and coatings technology — including corrosion-resistant coatings, stone chip-resistant coatings and low-emission coatings — are expected to lead to:

1. Introduction of chip-resistant primers and stone chip-resistant coatings on upcoming 1984-model Ford Tempo and Mercury Topaz replacements for Ford Fairmont and Mercury Zephyr.

2. Unveiling of "unibase" materials — flexible, durable polymers—for use as a paint base coat on both steel and plastic auto exteriors; these are targeted for appearance on 1984 Mark VII and future models.

3. Breakthrough application of high-solids clearcoat and base coat polymers that reduce paint-operation emissions and are expected to go on the 1985 Ford Sierra and, later, the company's luxury models.

4. Full implementation by calendar year 1987 of emission-reducing paint systems throughout Ford Motor Co.'s network of U. S. assembly plants.

The research, development and trial projects have been under way in Mt. Clemens, Mich., where on Dec. 10 Ford unwrapped a new $5 million facility staffed by 76 engineers and technicians. Their job is to improve the corrosion resistance, durability, appearance and emissions of Ford paints and coatings.

• The new chip- and stone-resistant primer/coating slated for Tempo/Topaz models will replace vinyl coatings for lower-body side protection. The intent is to improve exterior appearance, get equivalent protection at half the coating thickness and eliminate in-plant "masking" operations required for vinyl applications.

Although impact-resistant materials already are used on some Ford and other cars in Europe, engineers in Mt. Clemens claim their new coating offers additional benefits of lower-temperature curing and much-improved corrosion resistance.

Following introduction on Tempo/Topaz in March, the new coating is planned for other car lines during the next few years.

Another project involves polymer development for high-solids enamels, basecoats/clearcoats and primers.

Several projects are moving ahead in Mt. Clemens including

Continued on Page 8, Col. 1

Mardikian firm files Chapter 11 bankruptcy

SANTA ANA, Calif. — Albert Mardikian, owner of Trend Import Sales, Inc., of Newport Beach, has filed for bankruptcy under Chapter 11 in U. S. District Court here.

According to papers filed by Mardikian, he has claims and debts totaling $3,605,504.77 against his company and assets of about $1 million. Mardikian told several local papers that the California Air Resources Board's civil lawsuit seeking at least $310,000 in penalties forced him into the move.

In his papers, Mardikian reported $2.6 million in claims resulting from two lawsuits currently in litigation. The CARB action is listed at $1.6 million, while the other, a $1 million lawsuit, was filed 18 months ago by Dr. Rick Hartbrodt in a Torrance (Calif.) superior court.

According to Hartbrodt's attorney, the lawsuit was filed after several cars purchased by his client from Mardikian were seized by government agents as stolen cars. Although Mardikian was never implicated in the thefts, Lee Lipscomb, Hartbrodt's attorney, said the seller should be responsible for the financial loss.

By filing bankruptcy, Mardikian was able to obtain a stay on the litigation pending against him. Susan Durbin, the state's assistant attorney in charge of CARB's case, said she will file a motion asking that the stay be lifted.

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58th year — No. 4946

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shop talk

Continued from Page 10

4 percent, asuming an inflation rate of 4 to 5 percent."

Because of the increased age of cars on the road, Pond said the demand for parts should remain strong for the foreseeable future.

"However, given the 10 percent increase in car age since 1979, we have not seen the level of growth in repair activity that we would expect," he said. "The reason for this is some deferral of maintenance."

Pond said the high level of unemployment and the lack of growth of discretionary income over the last three years has caused many drivers to seriously neglect their cars.

"Fortunately, we do not see this as a long-term trend and, when the economy once again picks up steam," he said, "I think we are going to see a release of purchasing power for car maintenance and parts that should translate into strong sales growth for the industry in 1983."

Turning to the outlook for the shock and strut market overall, Peter J. Huber, Maremont's vice-president, sales and marketing, Domestic Automotive Group, said the firm is continuing its program to increase production of struts and strut cartridges, although this market is still in its relative infancy.

"While we are projecting total strut units shipped to grow from only 4.7 percent of the total market, or 2.2 million units, in 1981, to 10.6 percent or 4.75 million units by 1985," he said, "struts will account for 26.2 percent of total retail sales dollars in 1985."

For the shock and strut market as a whole, Huber predicted an overall flat to slightly declining market in total units between now and 1985.

"Total retail sales, however, should grow from $800 million in 1981 to slightly more than $1 billion in 1985," Huber said. "Beyond 1985, we are projecting continued sales growth due to the increasing number of strut-equipped vehicles."

While some 95 percent of all new domestic and import vehicles will be strut-equipped by 1985, Huber noted that only 45 percent of cars on the road will be strut-equipped at that time. Struts, with a higher ticket and absolute dollar profit margin, will continue to grow in unit volume and sales value well into the 1990s, he said.

• Huber noted further changes in the shock and strut business.

"Today, about one-third of all shock sales are in the do-it-yourself category," he said. "We expect this number to drop correspondingly with the increased usage of struts, since the do-it-yourselfer will be discouraged by the cost of the tools needed, the difficulty of replacement and the fact that a front-end alignment is often required when replacing struts."

On the exhaust side of the aftermarket, Huber said total aggregate volume in the industry has declined 1½ to 2 percent per year since the early 1970s, adding up to a decline of 18 percent in mufflers shipped by major manufacturers in the last decade.

"However, the declining unit volume doesn't tell the whole story," Huber said. "From 1970 to 1981, the total dollar value of the exhaust market increased approximately 170 percent from $650 million to $1.75 billion at retail."

Because of its market size, ranked third behind tires and batteries, Huber said the distributor and retailer cannot overlook the opportunities the exhaust market presents.

Huber estimated that one out of every four cars and light trucks on the road have some exhaust system work done on them each year and noted that there are several key factors which should result in an overall increase in exhaust-system repair work and total exhaust sales.

"These factors," Huber said, "include the growing number of vehicles on the road, the increase in the average age of vehicles on the road, the continued increase of total miles driven and the move to lighter gauge materials which reduce vehicle weight, which should increase exhaust wear.

"This past year we have seen indications that exhaust replacements on recent model cars are returning to pre-catalytic-converter era wearout rates," Huber said. "By 1985, we are projecting total retail sales of exhaust system parts to reach $2.25 billion, an increase of 28.5 percent over 1981 sales."

In addition, Huber projected a slight upturn in exhaust unit volume, reversing a 10-year decline.

Model breakdown

Auction Averages

	December To Date	November	October
1982	$6,763	$6,961	$7,962
1981	6,086	6,141	6,457
1980	4,812	4,904	5,115
1979	4,111	4,479	4,511
1978	3,247	3,424	3,493
1977	2,677	2,822	2,812
1976	2,260	2,001	2,091
1975	1,269	1,188	1,355
Overall Average	$4,560	$4,569	$4,513

Used car sales

Auction Averages

December to date	$4,560
Month ago	$4,580
Year ago	$4,049

factories list auction dates

Chrysler Corp.

Dec. 21—Hatfield Auto Auction, Hatfield, Pa.; Aptco Auto Auction, Taylor, Mich., and Golden Gate Auto Auction, Fremont, Calif.

Dec. 22—Dallas Auto Auction, Grand Prairie, Tex.

Thornton comes home

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo.—Lee Thornton, a native Missourian, has returned to his home state to head Lee Thornton Pontiac-GMC-Honda here. Most recently, he had been a general manager for Don Carlson Honda in Tulsa.

Lincoln-Mercury deal

John Darvish, center, signs a Lincoln-Mercury sales and service agreement making him the dealer at Wilson Powell Lincoln-Mercury, Temple Hills, Md. With him are T. F. O'Hare, left, Eastern regional sales manager, and J. E. Wright, Washington district sales manager.

truck personnel

Continued from Page 14

nel. Formerly with Ford, he joined Chrysler in 1981 as truck sales director.

GM Truck-Bus Group

Four Chevrolet engineering executives have been transferred to the General Motors worldwide Truck & Bus Group.

The men and their new positions in the Truck and Bus Engineering Operations are: **H. B. Ernst**, executive engineer; **John H. Gebo**, director of experimental engineering; **Paul R. Johnson**, chief engineer in charge of engine and component design, and **Ralph C. Mangold**, chief engineer for design activities.

At Chevrolet, Ernst was executive engineer in charge of administration; Gebo was director of engineering resources; Johnson was chief engineer in charge of chassis components, and Mangold was staff engineer in charge of design services.

Rockwell's Darragh gets aftermarket post

J. F. Kent Darragh has been named aftermarket sales director for the Service Parts Division, Rockwell International Heavy Vehicles Component Operations.

Darragh began his automotive career in 1970 at Ford of Canada, where he held several positions in finance before joining Rockwell in 1974. Prior to his promotion, he was controller of North American Field Sales/Marketing and the Service Parts Division.

used-car auction directory

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Hikes are $100 to $300 on 200-SX and 280-ZX; most trucks unchanged

Nissan ups prices on sporty models

CARSON, Calif. — Nissan U.S.A. has completed the pricing of its '83 models with boosts of $100 to $300 on 200-SX and 280-ZX autos.

Prices of eight pickup truck models are unchanged for '83, and five others rose $190 each.

Earlier, Nissan announced hikes of $100 to $300 on its Sentra, Stanza and Maxima cars (AUTOMOTIVE NEWS, Sept. 27). The company said the increase on its full line of '83 cars and trucks averages $198, or 2.2 percent.

Destination and handling charges were boosted $10 to $175.

Nissan also placed stickers on the rest of its Pulsar line, which replaces the 310 series for '83. The Pulsar two-door sedan is $6,299, and the four-door sedan is $6,499. They join the Pulsar NX coupe, previously announced at $7,399.

The newly priced 200-SX and 280-ZX are Nissan's sporty models. In the 200-SX line, the Deluxe hardtop and hatchback coupes rose $260 each, and the Sports Luxury hardtop and hatchback went up $100. The 200-SX models are priced from $7,999.

On the 280-ZX, Nissan announced increases of $300 across the board — the 2-seater and 2+2 coupes and the Turbo versions of those models. Prices of the 280-ZX start at $14,799.

Pickup truck prices start at $5,858 for the Standard regula bed. The Deluxe regular bed $6,529, and the Deluxe long b is $6,729. All are unchang from final '82 prices. Prices diesel pickups also are u changed.

Up $190 are the Sports Tru (2WD and 4WD), the Delu King Cab GL (2WD) and t 4WD regular bed and long b units.

Neoclassic maker finds showroom

CHICAGO. — Neoclassic-car maker Baroque Motorcars has entered into an agreement with its dealer here to use his new showroom for Baroque's national showroom.

Baroque President Russell A. Knudsen said the decision was prompted by changing flight schedules, which make access to the maker's manufacturing facility in Omaha difficult.

Remodeled facilities of Carriage Works, Ltd., here, feature Baroque models as well as other restored classic and exotic cars. Dealer is Marvin Guccione.

Toyota sweetens truck incentives

TORRANCE, Calif. — Toyota has added two programs to its "82 Record Challenge" truck incentive, which pays $250 on 4x4 gasoline pickups, $400 on 4x2 gasoline pickups and $550 on 4x2 diesels.

A new "Record Run" program, going from Dec. 3 to Jan. 2, 1983, pays dealers an extra $200 on every '82 or '83 truck they sell, once they hit a 100 percent qualifying December objective. The still-current Record Challenge program paid off only on '82s.

Under a "Pull for the Record," also from Dec. 3 to Jan. 2, salesmen receive a pull on a regional board, each time they se a truck, giving cash awards of $50 to $500. Sales managers earn a 25 percent bonus, based on whatever their salesmen earn.

Adams Motor Co.'s 50th year

Julian O. Adams, center, and his son, Julian R. Adam right, are joined by L. W. Baker, Washington zone manage for Chrysler Corp., on the occasion of the 50th anniversa of Adams Motor Co., a Chrysler-Plymouth dealership locate in Lynchburg, Va.

IMPORT SALES BY MODEL

	November, 1982	November, 1981	Jan.-Nov., 1982	Jan.-Nov., 1981
Alfa Romeo	184	171	1,953	2,033
Audi	3,791	4,057	41,877	46,230
4000	951	1,065	12,169	17,421
4000d	286	43	2,803	43
5000	1,433	1,709	15,226	15,883
5000d	33	363	1,308	5,731
5000 Turbo	302	473	3,771	5,016
5000 TD	317	.....	2,546	.....
Coupe	433	404	3,831	2,136
Quattro	36	.....	223	.....
BMW	4,364	2,417	46,178	37,536
320	3,178	1,935	32,603	29,136
528	745	271	9,089	5,396
633	96	81	1,268	977
733	345	130	3,218	2,027
Chrysler/Mitsubishi	5,468	8,380	95,153	102,651
Colt	3,733	3,393	70,221	39,602
Sapporo	945	830	11,785	12,451
Challenger	790	883	13,147	11,680
Champ '82	.....	3,274	.....	38,918
DeLorean	.....	654	2,830	2,367
Fiat	404	1,191	13,540	30,961
Strada	92	229	4,364	6,555
Brava	34	222	2,392	7,135
X-1/9	49	234	2,247	6,138
Spider	229	506	4,537	11,114
Honda	29,618	22,010	337,779	343,623
Civic	11,541	11,097	122,692	144,385
Accord	15,458	9,058	178,775	158,475
Prelude	2,619	1,855	36,312	40,763
Isuzu	1,698	1,432	14,103	16,602
Jaguar	1,384	469	9,130	4,135
Lancia	75	41	1,050	1,018
Mazda	14,712	11,995	149,865	155,810
GLC	5,587	4,069	50,328	58,714
626	4,749	4,402	53,902	56,707
RX-7	4,376	3,524	45,635	40,389
Mercedes-Benz	5,444	4,929	58,564	56,643
240D	895	1,133	12,157	13,131
300D	1,715	980	15,038	12,097
300CD	120	204	1,543	1,240
300TD	215	250	2,585	2,978
300SD	1,281	1,288	14,929	14,829
280E	.....	23	28	1,169
280CE	.....	12	1	581
380SEL	361	230	3,160	2,149
380SL	719	795	7,507	7,071
380SEC/SLC	136	10	1,590	1,306
Miscellaneous	2	4	26	92
Mitsubishi	1,515	.....	2,690	.....
Starion	441	.....	802	.....
Cordia	584	.....	1,017	.....
Tredia	490	.....	871	.....
Nissan	41,362	33,027	430,467	431,746
210	230	11,160	59,287	149,360
Sentra	16,872	.....	116,180	.....
310	1,558	3,808	42,566	74,537
Pulsar	4,313	.....	4,488	.....
510	.....	.....	.....	32,684
Stanza	4,893	4,245	55,550	9,365
Maxima	5,847	3,284	48,655	31,908
200SX	2,663	4,960	45,677	72,335
280ZX	3,323	4,641	52,901	57,590
Hawaii	1,663	926	5,549	3,863
Other	.....	3	.....	105
Peugeot	1,065	1,078	13,106	15,708
504	94	131	1,459	2,325
505	420	130	4,441	2,054
505D	24	105	684	2,065
505TD	448	601	5,553	8,574
604TD	57	90	705	497
Tourist	22	21	264	193
Porsche	1,270	977	12,246	9,983
924	5	292	1,678	2,892
924 Turbo	9	144	641	1,749
944	748	.....	4,110	.....
911SC	387	350	4,036	3,530
928	121	191	1,781	1,781
930 Turbo	.....	.....	.....	1
Renault	3,397	2,885	35,509	28,832
Le Car	2,621	2,214	19,158	18,721
18i	145	671	7,378	10,111
Fuego	631	.....	8,973	.....
Saab	1,902	1,415	17,038	13,326
99	.....	3	1	314
900	418	189	4,111	1,975
900S	424	450	3,751	4,348
Turbo	1,050	769	8,911	6,581
Tourist	10	4	264	108
Subaru	13,512	10,548	138,741	140,855
Toyota	42,792	36,096	484,099	534,718
Starlet	1,339	1,561	18,188	31,042
Corolla	12,744	11,733	162,104	227,872
Tercel	13,247	7,760	121,920	111,517
Celica	8,186	8,440	106,134	94,538
Supra	2,784	1,995	31,261	13,778
Corona	8	1,065	3,105	21,187
Cressida	3,247	2,314	33,730	27,219
Land Cruiser	280	172	2,776	1,762
Hawaii	957	1,056	4,881	5,753
Other	.....	.....	.....	50
Volkswagen	6,390	4,369	61,106	76,971
Rabbit Convertible	799	580	8,198	11,431
Jetta	1,866	1,853	18,596	26,072
Vanagon	1,132	655	11,778	10,084
Quantum	1,197	115	10,099	115
Dasher	13	329	616	13,309
Scirocco	1,383	837	11,819	15,960
Volvo	4,712	4,419	68,974	61,397
DL	2,393	2,436	37,882	37,602
GL	940	865	10,884	9,769
GLT	.....	129	197	3,497
GLT Turbo	739	497	9,591	3,202
GLE/760	178	203	2,569	3,905
DL Diesel	.....	33	516	1,466
GL Diesel	411	199	6,469	219
Coupe	.....	28	78	1,111
Tourist	51	29	788	349
GT	.....	.....	.....	277
TOTAL IMPORTS	185,059	152,560	2,035,998	2,113,027

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November total swelled by light-truck incentives

Truck sales highest in five months

Continued from Page 14

than triple the year-ago 10,650. The 11-month count of 341,336 units was more than seven times greater than last year's 47,592.

The Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Assn. reported 197,273 sales in November by dealers franchised by its members, an increase of 42.7 percent over last year's 138,244 units.

Through November, the total was 2,070,679, an increase of 12.1 percent over the 1,846,628 units sold in the like period in 1981.

No. 1 Chevrolet said its dealers sold 78,279 vehicles during the month, a gain of 46 percent over last year's 53,599. The 11-month total of 750,169 units was 18.5 percent higher than the year-earlier 633,281.

During the month, Ford dealers retailed 67,376 new trucks, up 47.3 percent from the year-ago 45,756. The January-November count was up 7 percent to 725,800 units, compared with 678,279 in 1981.

November sales by Dodge and Plymouth dealers totaled 17,574, an increase of 33 percent over last year's 13,223. Through November, the count was 226,140, up 32 percent from the year-earlier 171,329 units.

GMC dealers sold 21,629 vehicles during the month, an increase of 82.7 percent over last year's 11,836 units. The 11-month total was up 32.8 percent, from 158,850 units a year ago to 210,947.

Sales of four-wheel-drive Jeep vehicles during the month totaled 5,512 units, a gain of 7.3 percent over the year-earlier 5,139. The January-November count was down slightly from a year ago, 58,369 versus 58,639.

Volkswagen pickup sales were down drastically for both November and the 11 months. The November total was down 55.2 percent, from 2,222 units in 1981 to 996, and the 11-month count was off 61.1 percent, from 31,046 a year ago to 12,072.

Toyota pickup sales during the month totaled 11,125 units, up 23 percent from the year-ago 9,044. Through November, the count was up 4.2 percent to 131,212 units, compared with 125,866 a year ago.

In November, Datsun dealers sold 13,789 units, 71.2 percent higher than the previous year's 8,054. The 11-month count was 97,267, down 11 percent from last year's 109,260 units.

• Mazda reported a gain of 142.5 percent increase in November sales, from 1,585 units a year ago to 3,844. The January-November count was 131 percent higher than last year, 36,736 versus 15,903.

Isuzu dealers retailed 1,523 new pickups during the month, an increase of 31.4 percent over the year-earlier 1,159. Through November, the total was 16,263 units, a gain of 85.3 percent over last year's 8,775.

During the month, Mitsubishi dealers sold 442 units, bringing the newcomer's two-month total to 694 vehicles.

Big Three November, year-to-date truck sales

	November		Year to date	
	1982	1981	1982	1981
Ford				
Vans	10,208	7,539	115,675	101,599
Club Wagon	2,857	1,662	29,934	22,938
Ranger	9,818	.....	94,203	.....
Courier	3,527	4,859	31,320	60,056
Bronco	3,574	2,736	37,054	32,817
Conventional Pickups	34,463	25,544	376,079	413,279
Mediums	NA	2,765	NA	38,843
Heavies	NA	651	NA	8,747
Chevrolet				
Vans	9,635	6,853	93,686	82,391
Sportvan	1,618	1,276	14,461	12,819
S-10	17,253	6,769	156,279	8,249
S-10 Blazer	2,973	.....	4,330	.....
LUV	1,633	2,475	21,485	60,028
El Camino	2,456	2,131	21,272	31,558
Blazer	1,899	1,617	22,406	20,058
Suburban	2,629	1,240	25,102	18,534
Conventional Pickups	37,480	30,286	367,311	379,815
Mediums	703	952	13,837	19,829
Chrysler				
Vans	4,729	3,754	56,527	45,607
Voyager	357	305	4,503	4,295
Sportsman	2,139	1,583	26,890	17,902
Rampage	1,076	.....	15,518	.....
Scamp	197	.....	386	.....
Arrow	145	501	5,034	8,182
Ram D-50	2,518	1,296	31,737	23,267
Trail Duster	.....	67	244	1,575
Ramcharger	1,179	362	9,863	4,711
Conventional Pickups	5,234	5,355	75,438	65,790
GMC				
Vans	2,619	1,470	25,255	21,257
Caballero	237	218	2,387	3,800
S-15	4,556	840	36,184	1,009
S-15 Jimmy	481	.....	591	.....
Jimmy	514	331	6,103	4,377
Suburban	873	287	8,496	4,101
Conventional Pickups	10,966	6,626	101,422	90,973
P models	254	279	3,501	3,322
Mediums	664	999	19,017	19,048
Heavies	465	786	7,991	10,963

Pennsylvania order prompts bus builder to expand

Continued from Page 14

foot structure near the main plant.

Scheduling material continues to be the biggest production problem, according to Harvey Dick, operations vice president.

"Hand rails don't come in or carpeting doesn't show up in time, and we have those buses just sitting there," he said.

Most of the steel products used are sourced in the U. S.

The company's major supplier of steel tubing is Pioneer Steel in Denver. "Forty-thousand to 90,000 pounds a week make Neoplan one of our major clients," said Harry Barnett, Pioneer salesman.

Local suppliers aid Neoplan's small-warehouse operation. A bus air-conditioning firm has been opened in the industrial area around Neoplan, and fiberglass is supplied daily from another satellite industry. Electrical materials are also purchased in Lamar.

Will the plant ever do its welding with robots? Probably not, said Dick.

"Robots are OK where you're building one after another of the same car, but we couldn't afford the investment required to accommodate the many variations that mean different materials along the lines here," he explained.

"We hit the break-even point in May and the plant has been profitable since June," Dick said.

Though it is an American factory which hires hometown workers, German is occasionally heard in the plant.

Approximately 30 skilled craftsmen from Neoplan's German plant have been brought to Lamar to aid in training. Lamar Community College also offered a training program for many of the local men and women.

In 1953 the firm came up with a new design for attaching axles to a bus steel skeleton. It was called "neoplan," meaning new idea, and the name has remained.

Loss rate high on unibody cars; too many 'totaled'

Continued from Page 14

car buyers by rating each make and model in terms of projected comprehensive and collision premiums.

3. Vehicle re-inspection should be mandatory when repair cost exceeds a predetermined level.

4. The department of motor vehicles should adopt a monitored mechanic training program, including standards for instructors.

5. The insurance department or the insurance trade associations should have an ongoing program to determine and monitor the relationship of total losses to all types of collision losses.

6. The Federal Trade Commission and other relevant bodies should act to bring the prices of replacement parts in line with their actual costs.

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11 weeks later than in 1981

Auto production reaches 5 million

By Patricia Hoffman
Staff Writer

The five-millionth automobile of this year was produced in the U. S. last Friday, (Dec. 17), about 11 weeks later than in 1981. Last year, the makers reached the five-million mark on Oct. 1.

Year-to-date, there have been 5,005,484 cars assembled, a 19.59 percent decline from 6,225,156 built in the comparable period last year.

The makers slated 118,332 units last week, a 10.13 percent gain from the previous week's 107,447, and up 3.42 percent from 114,416 built in the same 1981 period.

Breakdown for the week by company was: General Motors, 59.40 percent; Ford Motor, 22.85 percent; Chrysler Corp., 12.38 percent; Volkswagen of America, 2.75 percent; American Motors, 2.54 percent, and Honda, 0.08 percent.

AMC's Kenosha facility was idle last week due to high inventories.

Still down last week for model changeover were GM's Bowling Green (Corvette) point and Ford's Lorain (Thunderbird-Cougar) facility. Both plants are scheduled to resume output in January.

Four assembly points returned last week following downtime to cut inventories. They were: GM's Willow Run plant, Ford's Metuchen and San Jose facilities and VWoA's Westmoreland point.

The GM Detroit plant operated 1.6 hours of daily overtime last week.

Also working overtime was Ford's Wixom point. Wixom operated Saturday, (Dec. 18).

Canadian car output climbs 73 pct. with strike settlement

Canadian auto and truck production last week showed substantial gains from the previous week's output as Chrysler Corp.'s Windsor facilities resumed operations after a five-week-long strike. Also helping boost last week's total was the return of General Motors' Oshawa points and the American Motors' Brampton facility, which had closed to cut high inventories.

Last week's auto output was estimated at 22,570 units, up 73.20 percent from the previous week's 13,031, and up 42.81 percent from 15,804 units built in the comparable 1981 period.

Car manufacturers have built 815,996 so far this year, a 3.92-percent gain from last year's 785,181.

Truck production last week reached 10,043 units, up 79.02 percent from the prior week's 5,610. But the total was 19.93 percent below the 12,542 units produced during the same time last year.

So far this year, the truck makers have finished 469,310 units, a 5.74-percent decline from 497,895 units built in the comparable 1981 period.

Chrysler's Windsor car and truck facilities resumed operations last week (Dec. 13) ending a five-week strike which began Nov. 5.

GM's Oshawa car plant and truck facility returned last week following downtime to control high inventories. Also back from inventory adjustment downtime was AMC's Brampton point.

All Canadian car and truck facilities were operating last week.

Truck production rises slightly as Ford, Jeep return

Domestic truck production last week rose 5.33 percent from the previous week's total, as operations resumed at Ford Motor's San Jose facility and Jeep's Toledo CJ-5 and CJ-7 lines started up, after downtime to cut high inventories.

Last week's output was estimated at 38,366 units, up from 36,424 built the previous week. But the total fell slightly below the 38,629 trucks assembled in the comparable 1981 period.

To date, there have been 1,856,280 units completed, a 15.91-percent gain from last year's 1,601,517.

The light-truck line at General Motors' Flint facility remained idle last week (Dec. 13) due to high inventories. Operations are slated to resume today (Dec. 20).

Also still down last week was Volkswagen of America's Westmoreland truck line. That line, idled June 28 for model changeover, is scheduled to return with 1983 models Feb. 7.

All other truck facilities were operating last week.

NHTSA backs world symbols for U. S. instrument panels

WASHINGTON. — The move toward development of a "world car" took another small step forward last week as the NHTSA offered a proposal that would allow auto makers to use internationally recognized instrument panel symbols in their cars, trucks and buses as early as 1983.

In responding to a petition by Renault, the safety agency said it would like to substitute the International Standards Organization (ISO) master lighting control symbol for the headlight and taillamp control currently in use and modify slightly the symbol specified for the clearance lamp system control.

NHTSA said it would also like to adopt the ISO-approved symbols for displays depicting brake failure and engine failure and for manual choke, horn and several heating and air conditioning controls.

The rationale for going to the ISO symbols is that they convey information more quickly and more accurately in addition to saving the manufacturers money by not having to produce separate instrument panels, controls and displays, NHTSA said.

The safety agency is proposing Sept. 1, 1985, as the effective date but said it would allow makers to adopt the ISO symbols as soon as it finalized its proposal, which should be in 1983 unless there is serious objection.

TRUCK PRODUCTION IN U. S.†

	Week Ended Dec. 18, 1982	Week Ended Dec. 19, 1981	Week Ended Dec. 11, 1982	Dec. to Date	Jan. 1 to Dec. 19, 1981	Jan. 1 to Dec. 18, 1982
CHEVROLET	11,793	13,703	12,187	32,135	465,207	639,313
DODGE	2,300	3,456	2,341	4,765	95,964	119,931
FORD	15,885	13,293	14,981	39,324	610,074	681,636
GMC	4,128	4,633	3,955	10,560	171,581	220,547
INTERNATIONAL	1,050	.....	1,038	2,702	65,934	45,671
VOLKSWAGEN	.....	594	.....	.....	36,863	8,103
JEEP	2,160	1,500*	872	4,384	85,388*	84,799
AM GENERAL	50*	50*	50*	130*	3,586*	2,380*
MISCELLANEOUS	1,000*	1,400*	1,000*	1,600*	66,920*	54,000*
Total Trucks, U. S.	38,366	38,629	36,424	96,600	1,601,517	1,856,380

CANADIAN TRUCK PRODUCTION

	Week Ended Dec. 18, 1982	Week Ended Dec. 19, 1981	Week Ended Dec. 11, 1982	Dec to Date	Jan. 1 to Dec. 19, 1981	Jan. 1 to Dec. 18, 1982
CHRYSLER CORP.	2,556	1,943	.....	2,556	84,205	94,960
FORD MOTOR	3,112	3,215	3,087	7,889	135,199	133,484
GENERAL MOTORS	4,100	7,384	2,246	8,772	267,400	229,781
INTERNATIONAL	275	.....	277	719	11,091	11,085
Total Trucks, Canada	10,043	12,542	5,610	19,936	497,895	469,310
N. American Trucks	48,409	51,171	42,034	116,536	2,099,412	2,325,690

†—Now includes window van production. *—Estimated.
Jeep includes commercial only. AM General includes government-destined vehicles.

Signature

Menasha (Wis.) dealer Robert H. Rector, center, signs with Pontiac as Peter F. Carroll, left, zone manager, and B. A. Schuman, district manager, observe.

U. S. CAR PRODUCTION

	Week Ended Dec. 18, 1982	Week Ended Dec. 19, 1981	Week Ended Dec. 11, 1982	Dec. to Date	Jan. 1 to Dec. 19, 1981	Jan. 1 to Dec. 18, 1982
AMERICAN MOTORS	3,000	2,550*	3,715	9,049	114,772*	103,131
AMC Total	.....	.....	834	1,325	.....	49,903
Spirit	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Concord	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Eagle	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Renault Total	3,000	.....	2,881	7,724	.....	53,228
Alliance	3,000	.....	2,881	7,724	.....	53,228
CHRYSLER CORP.	14,650	9,127	14,858	38,423	744,660	588,460
Plymouth Total	5,850	4,408	5,726	15,432	363,957	236,327
Horizon	2,100	2,219	2,055	5,628	137,568	75,708
Reliant	3,700	2,189	3,590	9,637	216,802	159,111
Caravelle ('81)	.....	.....	.....	.....	2,139	.....
Caravelle ('83)	50	.....	81	167	.....	1,508
Gran Fury	.....	.....	.....	.....	7,448	.....
Chrysler Total	2,600	1,260	2,441	6,352	56,771	112,183
LeBaron	1,200	1,260	1,395	3,424	51,909	93,977
Chrysler	.....	.....	.....	.....	4,862	.....
Chrysler E-Class	1,400	.....	1,046	2,928	.....	18,206
Dodge Total	6,200	3,459	6,691	16,639	323,932	239,950
Omni	2,000	2,032	2,172	5,191	123,809	70,912
Aries	3,200	1,427	3,369	8,410	170,359	126,995
Diplomat	.....	.....	.....	.....	12,644	.....
Dodge 400	400	.....	477	1,218	13,438	30,002
Dodge 600	600	.....	673	1,820	.....	12,041
St. Regis	.....	.....	.....	.....	3,682	.....
FORD MOTOR	27,042	25,113	25,157	63,966	1,288,626	1,080,344
Ford Division	16,596	16,179	15,408	38,695	869,333	674,095
Escort	7,052	4,106	4,252	11,304	343,088	258,704
Fairmont	2,983	3,162	3,003	7,918	173,933	125,789
Mustang	2,089	4,051	4,022	8,120	146,879	124,159
LTD/Granada	3,622	3,389	3,664	9,918	100,372	128,390
Thunderbird	.....	1,471	.....	.....	62,575	29,326
Crown Victoria/Ford	675	.....	467	1,260	40,886	1,339
EXP	175	.....	.....	175	1,600	6,388
L-M Division	10,446	8,934	9,749	25,271	419,293	406,249
Mercury Total	8,030	7,291	7,339	18,999	356,869	310,278
Lynx	2,173	1,174	1,028	3,201	114,614	79,733
Capri	183	1,355	458	1,052	48,680	32,290
Zephyr	968	1,449	972	2,393	50,580	39,676
Marquis/Cougar	2,425	1,840	2,416	5,954	48,744	59,543
Cougar/XR7	.....	162	.....	.....	28,332	10,580
Gr. Marquis/Marquis	2,228	1,311	2,465	6,346	64,904	86,685
LN7	53	.....	.....	53	1,015	1,771
Lincoln Total	2,416	1,643	2,410	6,272	62,424	95,971
Continental ('82)	499	822	482	1,270	11,495	19,738
Lincoln	1,120	481	1,126	3,105	25,976	46,821
Mark VI	797	340	802	1,897	24,953	29,412
GENERAL MOTORS	70,290	73,434	63,642	171,567	3,913,160	3,148,802
Buick Division	17,634	14,578	14,233	41,022	858,713	737,580
Skylark	3,620	3,261	190	5,860	258,879	134,861
Skyhawk J	1,405	.....	1,366	3,482	.....	64,314
Century	2,515	2,102	2,504	5,339	101,724	109,717
Regal	4,950	4,751	5,035	13,028	260,216	205,658
Buick	3,960	3,065	3,941	10,281	170,006	180,109
Riviera	1,184	1,399	1,197	3,032	67,888	42,927
Cadillac Division	6,225	5,250	6,251	16,599	256,063	241,557
Cimarron	540	124	618	1,496	22,282	10,060
Seville	520	322	522	1,371	23,153	22,279
Eldorado	1,205	1,237	1,214	3,151	57,117	55,644
Cadillac	3,960	3,567	3,897	10,581	153,511	153,574
Chevrolet Division	21,605	28,073	21,028	54,985	1,439,921	996,441
Chevette	4,420	8,529	4,879	12,341	351,535	204,355
Cavalier	2,665	1,901	2,680	6,523	137,084	92,608
Celebrity	2,245	3,902	1,279	4,292	22,215	66,056
Camaro	3,850	2,479	3,892	10,023	98,902	211,079
Citation	2,685	4,434	2,681	6,250	297,024	155,463
Malibu	2,784	2,777	2,715	7,130	221,711	122,389
Monte Carlo	1,856	3,191	1,803	5,628	137,845	80,238
Chevrolet	1,100	256	1,099	2,798	146,218	41,739
Corvette	.....	604	.....	.....	27,387	22,514
Oldsmobile Division	17,511	17,185	15,422	42,666	828,869	760,163
Omega	1,640	3,060	.....	2,673	131,286	73,176
Firenza	765	.....	814	2,175	.....	44,015
Cutlass	5,340	4,753	4,978	14,105	358,822	211,723
Cutlass/Ciera	2,745	3,210	2,736	5,481	21,948	119,948
Oldsmobile	6,240	5,520	6,109	16,175	273,260	277,308
Toronado	781	642	785	2,057	43,553	33,993
Pontiac Division	7,315	8,348	6,708	16,295	529,594	413,061
Acadian†	.....	331	30	89	18,218	9,617
2000	1,765	.....	1,815	3,641	87,193	40,402
1000	1,075	500	479	1,890	87,411	34,874
Firebird	1,680	1,199	1,605	4,112	48,987	122,890
Phoenix	715	1,159	711	1,426	95,409	45,019
G. Prix/B'ville ('83)	2,080	3,285	2,068	5,137	125,266	129,917
A6000	.....	1,874	.....	.....	15,019	30,342
LeMans	.....	.....	.....	.....	42,027	.....
Pontiac	.....	.....	.....	.....	10,064	.....
HONDA*	100*	.....	75*	220*	.....	510*
VOLKSWAGEN	3,250	4,192	.....	4,980	161,929	82,074
CHECKER	.....	.....	.....	.....	2,009*	2,163*
Total Cars, U. S.	118,332	114,416	107,447	288,205	6,225,156	5,005,484

CANADIAN CAR PRODUCTION

	Week Ended Dec. 18, 1982	Week Ended Dec. 19, 1981	Week Ended Dec. 11, 1982	Dec. to Date	Jan. 1 to Dec. 19, 1981	Jan. 1 to Dec. 18, 1982
AMERICAN MOTORS	1,133	1,173	.....	1,133	34,322	29,385
CHRYSLER CORP.	4,128	3,071	.....	4,128	67,059	148,616
FORD MOTOR	8,504	1,950	8,694	19,268	203,895	283,214
GENERAL MOTORS	8,580	9,385	4,112	15,138	469,670	344,874
VOLVO	225	225	225	585	10,235	9,907
Total Cars, Canada	22,570	15,804	13,031	40,252	785,181	815,996
N. American Cars	140,902	130,220	120,478	328,457	7,010,337	5,821,480
N. American Trucks	48,409	51,171	42,034	116,536	2,099,412	2,325,690
North American Cars and Trucks	189,311	181,391	162,512	444,993	9,109,749	8,147,170

†—All Acadians and Caravelles are built for sale in Canada. *—Estimated.
*—Honda figures are estimated. Actual Honda production totals will be released next Spring.

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Newest Fiat

Uno to be unveiled for Europe

Fiat will launch its high-volume, lower-middle-price-range Uno in Florida next month in conjunction with the launch of the space shuttle, even though the car is to be marketed only in Europe. Styled by Giugiaro, the Uno hatchback is 143 inches long, 61 inches high and is available with 900-, 1,100- and 1,300cc powerplants. Story on Page 2.

Year's car production slumps to 5,055,551, lowest since '58

By Patricia Hoffman
Staff Writer

The 1982 calendar year was a losing battle for domestic auto makers as sluggish sales slashed car output to its lowest point in 24 years.

The industry produced an estimated 5,055,551 cars this year, down 19.50 percent from 6,280,045 in 1981. It was the lowest total since 1958 when only 4,244,045 cars were assembled.

Each of the auto companies suffered losses in 1982, with Volkswagen of America suffering the most on a percentage basis. It built 84,707 cars, a 49.51 percent decline from last year's 167,755. Also down this year was American Motors with 58,062 units, 46.89 percent behind 109,319 in 1981.

Declines by the Big Three were higher numerically but lighter on a percentage basis: Chrysler Corp., 600,180 for 1982, down 19.94 percent from 749,687 for 1981; General Motors, 3,207,593, down 18.39 percent from 3,930,176, and Ford Motor, 1,102,236, a 16.51 percent decline from last year's 1,320,198.

Checker Motors, which closed down operations in July, built 2,163 units in 1982, down 25.67 percent from 2,910 units produced during a full year of production in 1981.

Honda has built an estimated 610 units in the U. S. since production began Nov. 1.

• For December, the car manufacturers slated 386,568 units, an 8.99 percent gain over 354,697 built in December last year, but fourth-quarter output was estimated at only 1,208,743 units, down 7.64 percent from 1,308,774 finished in the final three months of 1981.

It is the lowest fourth-quarter total since 1975 when 1,931,648 cars were produced, and the lowest for any quarter since only 1,087,000 units were completed in the first quarter this year.

Truck production for the 1982 calendar year is estimated at 1,889,736 units, up 11.09 percent from last year's 1,701,122. It is the highest yearly output since 1979 when 2,973,498 trucks were assembled.

In December, the truck manufacturers scheduled 129,956 units, an 11.34 percent gain from 116,716 built in the comparable 1981 month.

For the final three months of 1982, the truck makers estimated 415,130 units, up 3.64 percent from 400,548 built during the fourth quarter last year.

Due to the shortened holiday week last week, domestic car production was estimated at 97,043 units, down 18.90 percent from 119,652 built during five days of assembly the previous week. Output rose 39.08 percent from last year's 69,775 units.

Breakdown for the week by company was: GM, 59.62 percent; Ford, 22.41 percent; Chrysler, 12.08 percent; AMC, 3.13 percent; VWoA, 2.68 percent

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Seeks to avoid 'severe burdens' on industry and consumers

EPA to ease high-altitude rules

By Jake Kelderman
Washington Staff Writer

WASHINGTON.—The EPA is about to take step two in its bid to help out the U. S. auto industry.

On the heels of its previously announced two-year delay in the tough 1985 diesel particulate emission requirement, it will propose a significant easing of the 1984 and later high-altitude emissions requirements.

According to a draft of the proposed interim final rule, the EPA would require of the auto makers, not that their 1984 cars and light trucks meet low-altitude tailpipe standards at any and all altitudes as Congress apparently mandated, but rather that they display such emission control only when tested at 5,300 feet, or the Denver test facilities.

By adopting this approach, the agency avoids the necessity of having the auto makers mount "complex electronic controls or expensive turbochargers" on many vehicles sold nationwide to meet the requirements, the draft says.

"We do not believe Congress intended that its objectives regarding improved air quality at high altitudes be met by placing unwarranted and severe burdens on the industry and consumers," the EPA says in justifying this "creative" interpretation of the high-altitude requirement.

In this vein, the agency also will propose to exempt certain low-powered vehicles from the high-altitude requirements altogether, arguing that the cost of modifying them for 1984 high-altitude compliance would make them so expensive that they would be unsaleable at both high and low altitude.

"We do not believe that Congress wanted the high-altitude requirements to result in a nationwide loss of model availability," the EPA says.

To get the exemption, makers can apply the same criteria as the agency now accepts under its 1982-1983 high-altitude re-

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breaking news

Fiat rebate aims at boosting sports car sales

HASBROUCK HEIGHTS, N. J. — Fiat Motors of North America, in an effort to cut 1982-model inventories and ease the transition to the '83s, is offering some new and hefty dealer incentives. Until further notice, a rebate of $2,000 will go to the dealer with retail delivery of each 1982 Fiat X 1/9, $1,500 with each Spider 2000 and $1,500 with each Spider Turbo. Fiat said a total of 4,978 units are eligible for the incentive.

See BREAKING NEWS, Page 8, Col. 1

Lyles says dealers are more confident now than when he took office a year ago

Outgoing NADA chief is guardedly optimistic about 1983

By Al Fleming
Industry Editor

When George Lyles became 1982 NADA president last February, car dealers were guardedly optimistic that the next 12 months would bring an end to the three-year decline in new-vehicle sales.

Even though interest rates — one of the major factors impacting dealers — have dropped since then, and the inflation rate is down, auto sales continued to slump in 1982. The hoped-for turnaround did not materialize.

Now, as Lyles approaches the end of his one-year term as head of the nation's franchised new-car and truck dealers (he will be succeeded by current First Vice President William C. Turnbull at the 1983 NADA convention in Las Vegas in February), he remains guardedly optimistic.

"The (NADA) forecast for 1983 is for a slight upturn, possibly 10 percent higher sales than '82. The lower interest rates and inflation slowdown have improved consumer confidence somewhat," Lyles said during an Automotive News interview in Detroit.

He added: "What happens to the general economy will be the controlling factor in how far sales climb, but we see signs of improvement, and if the voluntary restrictions by the Japanese on imports continue, the improvement will be mostly in domestic products."

Lyles said he believes the Reagan Administration's economic policies are working and that "no one within NADA has proposed that we take a position opposing the Administration's programs."

He said a survey of dealers taken by NADA shows they are more confident now than a year ago, especially those in the Midwest and Sunbelt areas.

• Lyles said dealer attrition continued in 1982, but that it may have bottomed out: "Throughout most of 1982, the number of dealers going out of business continued on a track of about 100 a month, but indications are the last quarter of '82 is not going to be nearly as severe as a year ago. Last year (the fourth quarter) was in the vicinity of 300. About 200 might be a pretty good estimate this year."

He said the nation's dealer body shrank by nearly 4,000 during the last four years and now numbers about 19,000 franchised new-car and truck dealers, domestic and import, in NADA.

Lyles, president of Lyles Chevrolet and Transco Inc., a Rolls-Royce franchise, both in High Point, N. C., added an AMC/Jeep/Renault franchise in High Point this year.

He said dealers hope auto manufacturers won't rush to fill in open points vacated by those who have gone out of business during the economic downturn.

"If there's a sudden demand for new vehicles and manufacturers want to fill in dealer points, we're prepared to encourage a program that will not put us back in an over-dealered situation," he said.

He said that if the sales rebound comes quickly and sharply rather than gradually, and if 1983 turns out to be an 11-million rather than 8 million-unit car year, "we are concerned the manufacturers will ask us to provide new facilities, larger-size dealerships and larger stocks — they may be eager to re-establish some of the dealerships they lost."

Noting that the current slump is "the longest downturn we've had — four years," Lyles said, "we believe a gradual comeback would help us keep on top."

The NADA president called the reduction in the dealer body a needed trend that should strengthen remaining dealers.

"It's the only way the retail body is going to survive," he said. "We knew five or six years ago we were over-dealered, especially General Motors and Ford in the Northeast."

He said the attrition of some 3,500 to 4,000 dealerships since then was needed because the record new-vehicle volumes that had been predicted for the 1980s are not likely to evolve.

"It's very possible that we'll never see, in the next 10 years, those record levels and increases of the 1960s and '70s," he said.

He underscored that possibility by noting in 1973, when Lyles was chairman of the Chevrolet Dealer Council, the big GM di-

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